

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Praising the nation's victims' rights movement as having "not just a voice, but a vision," Congressman Jim Costa, D- Fresno, today introduced a concurrent resolution in the House of Representatives expressing Congress' support for the goals and ideals of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week will take place April 23 through 29.

Costa, one of the founders of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, is sponsoring the House Concurrent Resolution 378 along with Congressman Ted Poe, R-Texas, and Congresswoman Katherine Harris, R-Florida. The three are co-chairs of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus.

In his statement accompanying the bill's introduction, Costa said that victims of crime are no longer left in the shadows. He praised the nation's victims' rights movement as giving crime victims "not only a voice but a vision of what justice look like in America."

Costa pointed out that President Ronald Reagan first called for a national observance to recognize and honor crime victims in 1980. "President Reagan's commitment to the rights of victims led to Congressional passage of the Victims of Crime Act in 1984 which created the Crime Victims' Fund. Since then the Crime Victims' Fund had dedicated more than \$7.4 billion collected from criminal fines - not taxpayer dollars - that annually supports more than 4,400 victim assistance programs serving some 3.8 million victims and compensation to more than 165,000 victims for unreimbursed medical expenses, lost wages and funeral costs," Costa stated.

Numerous organizations in the 20th Congressional District, which Costa represents, receive funds from the Crime Victims' Fund. Those organizations include the probation departments in Fresno, Kern and Kings Counties, Clinica Sierra Vista, the Marjorie Mason Center and the Rape Counseling Service of Fresno

The 2006 National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme is "Victims' Rights: Strength in Unity." The week is celebrated with ceremonies and observances in Washington, D.C. and in hundreds of communities across the nation.

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